

DRAFT

Virginia Commission for the Arts Minutes, March 28-29, 2007 Art League Galleries Torpedo Factory Art Center, Alexandria

Members Present: Dr. Lucius Ellsworth, Chair; David Briggs; Nick Covatta (second day only); Maria Laqueur; Bonita Lestina; Rod Taylor; Beth Temple; Will Trinkle; Deborah Valentine; and Vaughan Webb

Members Absent: Susan Hirschbiel, Jackie Stone, and Eve Wilson

Staff Present: Peggy Baggett, Foster Billingsley, and Cathy Welborn

Guests: Jonathan Katz, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies; Ann Morrison, Fairfax Symphony, and Cathy Smith, Fairfax Symphony

Introduction

Lu Ellsworth, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. He welcomed the Commissioners to the meeting and thanked Beth Temple and David Briggs for making the meeting arrangements. He thanked the Art League for allowing the Commission to meet in its galleries. Peggy Baggett reviewed the agenda of the meeting.

Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2006, meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

2007-2008 Grants Budget

Peggy Baggett reminded the Commissioners that they had approved a draft grants budget for 2007-2008 and that final approval of the grants budget would be made at the June meeting. She reported that there are two areas of the budget that will need adjusting. The Commission staff is anticipating an increase in the number of applications for artist residency grants. Since it has been a priority for the Commission for the past two years to increase the number of applications, the Commission staff will recommend that additional money be transferred to that grant category in June.

In addition, there have been a number of changes in state government policies and procedures that are having a major impact on the administrative budget. In June the Commission staff will make a proposal to use a larger share of the National Endowment for the Arts Partnership Grant for administration. The additional costs include doubling the cost of staff travel as a result of the privatization of the state government car pool, the increase in mileage reimbursement for the Commissioners and panelists, the increase in staff time for purchasing and meeting planning, and the still-unknown impact of the new information technology charges for state agencies.

Presentation by Jonathan Katz

Lu Ellsworth introduced Jonathan Katz, Executive Director of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, who talked about trends among state arts agencies, including:

- C the use of strategic planning to engage policy-makers and building partnerships
- C stricter requirements for General Operating Support grantees to document the public value of their work and their advocacy efforts on behalf of the arts
- C stronger partnerships between state arts agencies and state Departments of Education
- C the consolidation of statewide advocacy groups, local arts agency associations, and arts education alliances.

Mr. Katz also talked about the work of National Endowment for the Arts Chair Dana Gioia to improve the image of the NEA with Congress and to strengthen the partnership with the state arts agencies.

Mayor of Alexandria

Mayor Bill Euille of Alexandria arrived at that point to welcome the Virginia Commission for the Arts to the City. He talked about the value of the arts in strengthening the community and in contributing to both economic development and tourism.

Recognition of Executive Director

The Commission recognized Peggy Baggett for her 30 years of service. Lu Ellsworth presented a resolution of the board thanking her for her work on behalf of the arts. The resolution was approved unanimously.

Support for Individual Artists

The Policy Committee had identified support for individual artists as an issue for consideration as the Commission updated its strategic plan and guidelines for funding for 2008-2010. There was a general discussion of the appropriate role for the Commission in supporting individual artists in which the following points were made.

- C There are fewer opportunities for visual artists than performers to get funding, and the fellowships are an important way of balancing this situation.
- C The Commission should clarify what it intends to achieve through the fellowships.
- C It would be helpful to get a report on the impact of the fellowships on past recipients.
- C The Commission should look for ways to support nontraditional and emerging artists.
- C Health care and life and business insurance may be more important issues for artists than fellowships.

The Policy Committee will discuss these issues further in working on the update of the Commission strategic plan.

Report on State and National Advocacy

Lu Ellsworth reminded the Commissioners that many members of the General Assembly are not running for reelection. He encouraged the Commissioners to contact candidates during the upcoming elections to determine their support for the arts.

Technology Enhancement Grants

Foster Billingsley presented the panel and staff recommendations on the Technology Enhancement Grants. David Briggs made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the grants. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Local Arts Agencies

Peggy Baggett presented a proposal for the next steps in strengthening the local arts agency network across the state.

- C Continue to fund the Virginians for the Arts Foundation to employ a contract employee to work with the local arts agencies.
- C Work with the Virginia Alliance of Local Arts Agencies to have sessions of interest to local arts agencies as part of the annual Art Works for Virginia conference, to sponsor at least one additional workshop per year, to explore options for a multi-day leadership institute, and to encourage local arts agency leaders to attend the annual Americans for the Arts conference.
- C Consider a new grant category of services to the field as part of planning to 2008-2010.
- C In partnership with the Virginia Alliance of Local Arts Agencies, evaluate the purpose and benefits of the separate application form and statewide local arts agency advisory panel for operating support grants for local arts agencies.

A discussion followed in which the following points were made.

- C The Commission should decide on the measure of success or accountability for the initiative for local arts agencies.
- C The question of whether to begin awarding operating support to the public local arts agencies should be discussed again as part of the update of the strategic plan.
- C Many rural areas of the state are not served by local arts agencies.
- C How does the Commission evaluate whether the programs of a local arts agency are valued by its community?
- C The Commission should be careful about creating additional levels of bureaucracy if there are no clear benefits. There are many communities in the state that have considered the idea of creating a local arts agency and decided not to do so.
- C There is more than one way to provide services to the arts, and the Commission should consider different approaches for different communities.
- C The Commission will discuss a grant program to support new positions that provide services to the field but should pay careful attention to the plans for sustaining such positions.

David Briggs made a motion to approve the staff recommendations. The motion was

seconded and approved unanimously.

Non-Profit Arts Organizations as Priority in Funding

Following a discussion begun at the December meeting, an ad hoc committee of Lu Ellsworth, Will Trinkle, and Nick Covatta had reviewed the Commission philosophy of regarding nonprofit arts organizations as a top priority in funding. There was consensus that General Operating Support funding should continue as the largest grant program of the Commission. David Briggs asked if there are ways to increase the accountability of the arts organizations for these funds.

Commission Staffing

Peggy Baggett reported that she would be asking for authorization for two additional full time positions with the Commission in the 2008-2010 biennium.

Planning for 2008-2010

Peggy Baggett reviewed the process and time line for updating the Commission strategic plan and guidelines for funding for 2008-2010. Lu Ellsworth asked if there are additional issues beyond those identified by the Policy Committee and at the December meeting that should be considered as part of the planning for 2008-2010. The following issues were named.

- C Continued improvement in the appearance of the Commission printed materials.
- C Progress toward online grant applications.
- C Virginia Heritage Awards

Election of the Nominating Committee

Lu Ellsworth opened the floor for nominations for the Nominating Committee. Vaughan Webb nominated Maria Laqueur and Jackie Stone. Nick Covatta nominated Vaughan Webb. Will Trinkle made a motion to close the nominations. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Beth Temple made a motion to elect Maria Laqueur, Jackie Stone, and Vaughan Webb to the Nominating Committee. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Old and New Business

Peggy Baggett presented a request from Susan Jennings of the Public Art Program of Roanoke for a Technical Assistance Grant and asked if the Commission would consider the public art programs of the state to be eligible for such funding. There was concern that the local governments are creating such positions but not budgeting for professional development. There was also concern that the Commission does not have a list of the existing public art programs and is unable to determine the budgetary impact of making these programs eligible for Technical Assistance funding. There was consensus among the Commissioners not to award Technical Assistance Grants to public art programs that are divisions of local government at this time.

Lu Ellsworth announced his retirement as President of the Appalachian School of Law.

Rod Taylor announced that he will be getting married later in the spring.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.